

BOOK NOTICES

My Nature Nook, or Notes on the Natural History of the Vicinity of Dunedin, Florida. By W. S. Blatchley. Indianapolis, Indiana. The Nature Publishing Company, 1931. 302 pp. 15 pl.

When one is familiar with an author only through his descriptions of hundreds of new species of Coleoptera, Heteroptera and Orthoptera, or his writings on geology, petroleum, lime, mineral waters and clays, one is apt to think of him only impersonally in connection with such subjects. The man himself becomes rather vague, and one thinks of him as aloof from the ordinary things of life.

To students of American Coleoptera, Heteroptera and Orthoptera, to those who know Mr. Blatchley only through his great manuals on these subjects, his latest book provides them with an opportunity of meeting him personally, of going on collecting trips with him, of listening to his opinions, and of enjoying with him the screaming cry of the fish hawk, a Carolina rail taking a bath, the silvery sides of the spotted sea trout, frogs suddenly diving overboard, a lizard basking in the sunshine.

Mr. Blatchley purchased in 1913 a little tract of land just outside the town limits of Dunedin, Florida, for his winter home, and his book is concerned chiefly with the clearing of this tract, the building of his home and the natural history of the animals and plants near-by. One is introduced to the practical and hard work of cutting palmettoes all day long, to the pleasures of fishing, to the duties incidental to building a house, and then to days of leisure when Mr. Blatchley followed his own inclinations and enjoyed his pines and oaks and birds and insects and sunsets and storms. At times there is a note of sadness, but life, as we know, is not all happiness.

To read this book is to pay a long visit to Mr. Blatchley at his Florida home, to enjoy simple every-day happenings, to be contented, to be thoughtful, to be quiet, but best of all—to know Mr. Blatchley more intimately than one ever could by reading all his technical writings.—HARRY B. WEISS.